

## 12. SIGHT RECORD OF THE ORIENTAL BAY OWL (*PHODILUS BADIUS RIPLEYI*) IN THE ANAIMALAI HILLS, SOUTHERN WESTERN GHATS, INDIA

The Oriental Bay Owl is a rare and little known inhabitant of the wet evergreen forests of south and southeast Asia (Ali and Ripley 1983). Three subspecies are known from Indian limits: (i) the Sikkim Bay Owl *P. b. saturatus*, (ii) the Peninsular Bay Owl *P. b. ripleyi*, and (iii) the Ceylon Bay Owl *P. b. assimilis* (Ali and Ripley 1983). The peninsular race of the owl was discovered and described by a single specimen from Periasolai in the Nelliampathy hills of Kerala, south of the Palghat gap in wet evergreen forest (Hussain and Khan 1978). It was rediscovered in 1992 in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, Anaimalai (Kannan 1993). Another recent report of the bird was from rubber estates near Kannur in Kerala (R. Kannan, *pers. comm.*).

Here, I report a sighting of the Oriental Bay Owl in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary,

Anaimalais. A single bird was sighted on May 11 1996, in Karian Shola National Park. It was seen at 1515 hrs and could be clearly observed for about 15 min, while it perched in a large gaping hollow of an *Elaeodendron glaucum* tree about 9 m above the ground. The bird was observed by Natarajan, a local tracker, and myself in an area close to where the bird was earlier located by Kannan (1993). Careful documentation of the distribution of this rare bird is imperative in the face of threats to its remnant rainforest habitats in south and south-east Asia.

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*Researcher, Wildlife Institute of India,  
 Sengaltheri Field Station,  
 P.O. Kalakad-627 501,  
 Thirunelveli District,  
 India.*

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- KANNAN, R. (1993): Rediscovery of the Oriental Bay Owl (*Phodilus badius*) in Peninsular India. *Forktail* 8: 148-149.

## 13. UNEVEN SEX RATIO OF THE LONG-EARED OWL *ASIO OTUS* IN NORTHERN INDIA

The long-eared owl *Asio otus* is a holarctic species breeding north to the boreal zone. In the Indian subcontinent, it winters south to Sind, Lahore and central Nepal, breeding in north Baluchistan and Kashmir, and summering in Gilgit (Ripley 1982). Ali and Ripley (1983) report it upto Delhi, Kutch and Nepal.

In Europe, unequal sex ratios of migrant long-eared owls have been reported from Great Britain and Sweden. In Great Britain, female bias exists among migrants on Fair Isle (Harvey and Riddiford 1990) and wintering birds throughout

Britain (Wyllie *et al.* 1996, Williams 1996). In Sweden, male bias exists among wintering birds in the mainland (Overskrug and Kristensen 1994), although a non-significant female bias exists in a small sample of birds wintering on the island of Skåne (Williams 1996).

Long-eared owl skins from the Indian subcontinent (mostly from Punjab) in the British Museum of Natural History (Tring) were examined. Only those sexed by internal examination when collected and labelled were analysed. The criteria for sexing long-eared owls